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POL 33-1 JORDAN RIVER

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INCOMING TELEGRAM Department of State

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Action NEA

Info SS G SP SAH H EUR IO NSC INR CIA NSA DOD RMR

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1965 MAY 7 PM 12 26

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DE RUQMBE 520B 07/1550Z
O R 071535Z ZEA
FM AMEMBASSY BEIRUT
TO RUQMVL/AMEMBASSY TELAVIV IMMEDIATE 218
INFO RUEHCR/SECSTATE WASHDC 1223
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C O N F I D E N T I A L MAY 7

DEPARTMENT OF STATE A/CDC/MR
REVIEWED BY [illegible] DATE 5-1-65
RDS☐ or XDS☐ EXT. DATE
TS AUTH. REASON(S)
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DEPTEL 1139 TO TEL AVIV

POL 33-1 SYR-ISR

NO INFORMATION AVAILABLE ON LEBANESE PROGRESS ON DIVERSION PROJECTS BEYOND THAT REPORTED EMBTEL 1207 (RPTD 216 TO TEL AVIV) AND PREVIOUS. OUR EXPERIENCE IS THAT IDF INTELLIGENCE IS BEST INFORMED SOURCE ON DAY-TO-DAY ACTIVITY.

BELIEVE GRADING OPERATIONS CONTINUE ON SREID CANAL BUT ARE APPARENTLY STALLED SHORT OF BORDER. REASON MAY BE FORTUITOUS LOCATION PROTRUDING ROCKY MOUNTAINSIDE POSING TECHNICAL PROBLEMS. PRESIDENT HELOU AND FOREIGN MINISTER TAKLA MAY ALSO HAVE GIVEN ORDER SLOW DOWN AFTER

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OUR APPROACHES OF APRIL 24 AND 19 RESPECTIVELY. TAKLA IN PARTICULAR APPEARED TO ACCEPT WISDOM OF HALTING SHORT OF BORDER.

TAKLA ALSO INDICATED LINKAGE COULD TAKE PLACE ONLY AFTER FORMAL AGREEMENT REACHED ON QUANTITY OF WATER TO GO TO SYRIA (AND PRESUMABLY JORDAN). AS FAR AS EMBASSY AWARE, NO DATE YET SET FOR NEGOTIATIONS FOR SUCH AGREEMENT. TAKLA MAY HAVE BEEN REFERRING, HOWEVER, TO OPERATIONAL LINKAGE RATHER THAN SYMBOLIC JOINING OF CONSTRUCTION WHICH IS CURRENT PROBLEM.

WE UNDER IMPRESSION FRENCH PLANNED TO RAISE PRINCIPLE OF ACROSS-BORDER TRANSFERRAL DURING CURRENT HELOU VISIT TO PARIS. ISRAELIS ARE PRESUMABLY AWAITING MOMENTARY WORD FROM FRENCH ON RESULTS. WITH HELOU, TAKLA AND BIZRI IN PARIS, INFORMATION DIFFICULT OBTAIN IN BEIRUT.

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COMMENT: WE BELIEVE HELOU AND TAKLA ARE FULLY AWARE OF DANGER POSED BY SYMBOLIC LINKING WITH SYRIAN CONSTRUCTION, AS EMBASSY HAS REPEATEDLY DRAWN IT TO THEIR ATTENTION. LEBANESE MAY FIND PRACTICAL WAYS TO DELAY SOUTHWARD CONSTRUCTION OF SREID CANAL BUT THEY HAVE

PAGE THREE RUQMBE 520B C O N F I D E N T I A L
GIVEN NO SIGN THEY WOULD ACCEPT PRINCIPLE OF NON-TRANSFERRABILITY. LATTER WOULD SPELL END OF MAJOR PORTION ARAB DIVERSION SCHEME TO WHICH LEBANON IS POLITICALLY COMMITTED. IN ANY EVENT WE THINK FONMIN MEIR GROSSLY OVERPLAYING ISSUE BY ASSERTING EXTENSION OF CANAL TO BORDER WOULD BE "POINT OF NO RETURN". (TEL AVIV'S 1360 TO DEPARTMENT).

GP-3

MIDDLETON
BT

NOTE: ADVANCE COPY TO S/SO 1:23 PM, 5/7/65.